before the book's publication date. In characterizing "Psychobiography Today," he would have done well to pay attention instead to contemporary work, such as 2005's *Handbook of Psychobiography*, edited by William Todd Schultz and published by Oxford University Press.

Putting aside minor reservations, I must express my deep admiration for Nemeth's scholarship. It is not an exaggeration to say that Nemeth has taken this towering figure, Voltaire, who has been a puzzle to centuries of biographers, and has made him finally understandable. The book, in my view, joins the list of most outstanding psychobiographies.

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Reflections of an Organizational Consultant

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Review of Howard F. Stein, Insight and Imagination: a Study in Knowing and Not-Knowing in Organizational Life (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2007), ISBN: 13: 978-0-7618-3744-2, xxi, 196 pages, paperback $33.00, hardcover $49.95 .

Howard Stein is a trained anthropologist who has long been a productive psychohistorian. In addition to his principal career as an organizational consultant, he is Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Oklahoma and the author of more than twenty books and numerous articles in social science journals. His talents are such that he was recently nominated as Oklahoma Poet Laureate. Stein's book is organized into thirteen chapters with extraordinarily diverse text, though no tables or graphs are included. A large portion of the volume consists of anecdotes about the author's career as a consultant for organizations, especially hospitals.

Chapter 1 introduces the advantages of countertransference and of "not-knowing." Chapter 2 discusses the value of poems by the consultant. Chapters 3-6 are on hidden agendas, red herrings to mislead people, anthropological perspectives, and reactions to disasters. Chapters 7-8 are on change, loss, and grief, describing the author's involvement as consultant for a hospital (Chapter 7) and for a Conservative American Jewish synagogue (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 is on a misdiagnosis that contributed to death of an infant in a hospital. Chapters 10 and 11 are on the arts, especially poetry.

The anecdotes about consulting repeatedly state the merits of countertransference, which refers to the consultant's feelings in response to the perceived feelings of the employees in the organization. An additional emphasis is placed on the value of not-knowing because preconceptions or too much knowledge about the organization can interfere with enlightened countertransference and thereby can prevent adaptive responses to the problems.

Most of the anecdotes reflect the depression and discouragement of those Stein services: people in generally unpleasant and pathological situations, such as the anxiety and demoralization of employees after some of their coworkers are terminated in a "downsizing" or "reduction in force." The consultant applies countertransference to recognize and share their distress but his descriptions lack reports on the beneficial effects of the consultant.

Chapter 9 includes a brief description of a happy outcome that does not appear to involve a consultant; a manufacturing firm, beset by financial troubles, recovered without firing anyone because the chief executive officer refrained from scapegoating his managers and employees. Instead, he shared the common predicament with them and asked them for novel solutions.

Chapter 12, is a reprinted 1985 article by Stein in which he summarizes the career and emo-

tions of a fictitional young physician. The narrative emphasizes the physician's feelings of frustration and disappointment, during his internship and residency at an urban hospital and also after he becomes a general practitioner in a small town. At the end of the story, he feels despair combined with the dutiful statement, "I've got sick folks to see."

In Chapter 13, written as a dramatic play, the events described include the anguish of employees and the helplessness of a consultant responding to downsizing. The last episode describes the chief executive officer of a chain of stores who decides to indoctrinate the employees by the slogan "Work Will Make You Free." This is an obvious, although unstated similarity to the phrase, "*Arbeit Macht Frei*," at the entrance of a number of Nazi concentration camps where people were worked to death or killed directly.

An important purpose of the book is to integrate poems and other fine arts with the information on organizations and their consultants. One or more poems by the author are contained in five of the thirteen chapters. Portions of the *Fifth Symphony* by Shostakovich are described as suitable accompaniments of some of the printed text. The author suggests that the arts contribute helpfully to countertransference feelings. The literary devices are entertaining but they mainly add to the anguished feelings communicated in most of the prose. Stein clearly wants to convey feelings of despair in parts of the American workplace.

The word "imagination" in the title of the book evokes a statement by an eminent British literary scholar, G. K. Chesterton. "The function of the imagination is not to make strange things settled, so much as to make settled things strange." However, in the opinion of this academic psychologist, the emotions aroused by the poems and play are likely to interfere with the reader's understanding of the text.

The prose portions of the book are clearly stated and scholarly. Each chapter ends with a collection of references cited in the text. A minor quibble is the use of the term "Bibliography" instead of "References" for the list of publications. Many of the references are books and articles by the author himself. If the poetry and other artistic expressions were omitted, the essential information would be communicated much more concisely.

I agree with the author that the consultant needs to be aware of and to share the anguish of the employees, and also that preconceptions can block needed empathy. It is highly desirable to describe the beneficial effects of understanding "countertransference" and "not-knowing." Factual prose could convey these ideas more concisely and should include evidence for the beneficial effects of psychoanalytically-oriented consultants.

The principal value of this book may be the autobiographical information on the career and especially the feelings of the author. Howard Stein is a highly intelligent psychohistorian and a prolific author who has contributed greatly to the social science literature and to the art and science of advising organizations. The attempt in this book to combine factual and artistic communication is commendable, although it might be impossible in a medium that is limited to printed words. It appears to be an inefficiently laborious task.

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Bettelheim Undeconstructed

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